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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL UNSC KPKO CG

SUBJECT: FOLLOW UP TO OIOS INVESTIGATION ON MONUC
PEACEKEEPERS AND PURPORTED UN COVER UP

¶1. This is an action request. Department requests USUN and Embassy Kinshasa to discuss with appropriate UN officials what follow up action the UN has taken with India and Pakistan to the findings of Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) investigations that individuals in the Indian and Pakistani contingents of the UN Peacekeeping Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) were involved in gold smuggling and the supply of weapons or ammunition to militia members, and to discuss if such activity continues in the present. USUN and Embassy Kinshasa are also requested to inquire about claims that the UN has been discouraged from pursuing inquiries for political reasons, particularly for fear of alienating India and Pakistan, two of the largest troop contributing countries to UN peacekeeping operations. See paragraph 2 for background. Refer to paragraph 3 for suggested discussion elements.

¶2. Background:

In May 2007, MONUC announced that the OIOS would conduct an investigation into possible trafficking in gold and arms by peacekeepers deployed in 2005 in Ituri, in the northeast of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The announcement came after a report by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), which indicated that peacekeepers in Pakistan's contingent were engaged in trafficking with the Nationalist Integrationist Front (FNI) militia, one of five armed groups active in Ituri. The BBC alleged that the trafficking began in 2005, and cited witnesses who described secret negotiations between Pakistani blue helmets and FNI militia commanders known as &Kung-fu8 and &Dragon8 in the town of Mongbwalu. The OIOS investigation concluded that one officer had been responsible for dealing in gold, allowing traders to use UN aircraft to fly into town, putting them up at the UN base and taking them around town. However, the UN declared that &in the absence of corroborative evidence,⁸ its investigators &could not substantiate the allegation⁸ that Pakistani peacekeepers supplied weapons or ammunition to the militia. Upon inquiries in mid-March from the Department on follow up action to the findings of the investigation, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) stated that the OIOS report had been given to the Government of Pakistan. DPKO further stated that it had sent two letters to Pakistan asking for information on any action taken, but Pakistan had not formally replied.

In its latest report aired on April 28, the BBC said Indian soldiers were also implicated in the trafficking. The 18-month BBC investigation for its program Panorama found evidence that:

-Pakistani peacekeepers in the eastern town of Mongbwalu were involved in the illegal trade in gold with the FNI militia, providing them with weapons to guard the perimeter of the

mines.

-Indian peacekeepers operating around the town of Goma had direct dealings with the militia responsible for Rwandan genocide, now living in eastern DRC.

-The Indians traded gold, bought drugs from the militias, and flew a UN helicopter into the Virunga National Park, where they exchanged ammunition for ivory.

The BBC report also quoted UN sources saying they had been discouraged from pursuing an investigation for political reasons. High level UN officials, including DPKO Under Secretary General Jean Marie Guehenno, Special Representative

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of the Secretary General for MONUC Alan Doss, Deputy Spokeswoman for the Secretary General Maria Okabe, and OIOS head Inga Britt Ahlenius, have defended the organization against these charges, and have emphasized that whole countries, contingents should not be &smear8 on the basis of individuals, actions. Additionally, Pakistan has said that it has no means of influencing the UN, and that there is no evidence that its troops were involved in an illegal gold trade or re-arming militia. Likewise, the Indian Army emphasized that an investigation by OIOS had revealed that all by one of the allegations were based on hearsay or were not backed by credible evidence.

13. Begin suggested discussion elements:

-Ask what follow up actions have been taken by the UN in response to the conclusions of the OIOS investigations.

-Ask UN officials if they are aware of any follow up actions taken by Pakistan or India in response to the conclusions of the OIOS investigations.

-Note that the Department had been informed by DPKO in mid-March that the UN had sent two letters to the Government of Pakistan requesting information on any action it had taken in response to the findings of the OIOS report, but at that time Pakistan had not formally responded. Ask whether Pakistan has since responded to the UN's inquiries.

-Emphasize that we strongly agree with the UN that entire contingents should not be smeared on the basis of individuals, actions, but ask if any formal action was ever taken by the Governments of Pakistan or India against the individuals implicated in the OIOS report.

- Ask how the OIOS concluded that there was not sufficient corroborative evidence to substantiate the allegation that Pakistani peacekeepers supplied weapons or ammunition to militia.

-Ask if there will be a formal investigation on the allegations that Pakistani and Indian peacekeepers in the DRC had direct dealings with militia, and who purportedly traded gold, bought drugs, and exchanged ammunition for ivory.

-Discuss whether or not troop contributing countries, specifically India and Pakistan, have taken measures to discourage a thorough investigation of the allegations against its peacekeepers deployed in MONUC.

End suggested discussion elements.

14. Department requests response by Tuesday, May 6.

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